(c) if so, what are the details thereof and whether China has refuted these allegations ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) Discussions on regional and bilateral issues of common concern were held during our Prime Minister's meeting with the Chinese Premier, Mr. Zhao Ziyang, in New York on 23rd October, 1985.

(b) and (c) The Government have seen press reports in this regard. The Chief of Army Staff, General A. S. Vaidya was only expressing concern at some reports alleging that Pakistan might carry out a nuclear explosion in a third country friendly to Pakistan. The Chinese Government have, however, categorically denied the allegation that Pakistan will conduct an atomic bomb test in China and have also stated that China's nuclear cooperation with other countries is confined to peaceful purposes.

Off-shore Mining Prospects in the Arabean Sea

615. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been carried out in the Arabean Sea to assess the potential for off-shore mining;

(b) if so, what is the result of such survey; and

(c) if the potential is encouraging whether Government propose to draw a plan for its commercial exploitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Extensive survey of the coastal water of India has been made for various minerals. The results have been encouraging. Mapping of minerals almost in the entire western continental shelf in the Arabean Sea has been completed resulting in an understanding of placer deposits like ilmenite, rutile, zircon, phosphorite and monazite with varying proportions of magnetite and garnet.

(c) The Department is presently concentrating on the survey and exploration, mapping and assessment of resource potentialities in the off-shore regions. Because of the high cost involved in the exploitation of off-shore minerals from the seabed and considering the present level of development in the technology, commercial exploitation of the aforesaid minerals in the off-shore regions will be taken up at an appropriate time.

Posting of India-based Officers in Indian Missions abroad

616. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any review has been made recently by his Ministry regarding posting of India based officers in the Indian missions abroad;

(b) whether it has resulted in an increase or decrease in such posts; and

(c) whether any decision has been taken regarding posting at 'Labour Attache' in Indian missions, particularly in Gulf countries by creating such posts?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) No, Sir. The staffing pattern in Missions/Posts abroad is kept under constant review.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir. Indian Missions and Posts aborad perform various consular